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The United Church of Christ in Japan: An Analysis of the Background of and Trends toward Unity in Religion and State Resulting in the Creation of the United Protestant Church in Japan

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THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN

An analysis of the background of and trends toward unity in religion and state resulting in the creation of the United Protestant Church in Japan

by

Earl Van Best

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PREFACE

This thesis is a limited expression of many years of interest in and love for the Kingdom of God in Japan. It is offered as a lay critique of the bases from which have developed trends toward unity in state and religion. It has been difficult not to descend to the level of a biased judge on the one hand or to scale the heights of the prophet on the other, what with the alarming amount of misinformation available suggestive of the possibility of dramatic pronouncements based on half-truths. The Clan System, Shrine worship, war records, and the supposed reasons for the reported present-day trend away from the United Church of Christ in Japan have been omitted since each deserves fuller and abler treatment than is possible here.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. A. E. Cory, Head of the Department of Missions, School of Religion, for his able counsel, patient understanding, and friendly guidance growing out of many years of rich experience as a missionary in and student of the Orient; to the School of Religion Library staff for its long-suffering and generous help; to Eleanor for her loving assistance in research, typing and proof-reading.

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INTRODUCTION

The true name of the country we know as Japan is, Dai Nippon. The first half of the title signifies "great" while the last, perhaps used first by the Chinese as they looked toward the Islands of the East, means "Sun-Origin". Marco Polo is responsible for the modern pronunciation, since "Zipangu" was the nearest he could come to pronouncing the Chinese name Jih-pen or Ji-puan. A free English translation of the Chinese title gives "the Land of the Rising Sun".[1]

Little is known of the early history of the Japanese. The earliest records available come from the seventh century and are entirely unreliable being stories of mythology. Later records together with archaeological and ethnological findings have given fragmentary information regarding the early inhabitants of the four large islands composing modern Japan. Exactly where these people came from, and when, is not known; it is believed that they came from Korea, the Continent, Malaya, and the islands of the Central and South Pacific in the days of civilized man's infancy--long before Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. In all probability these migrants were either strong-willed explorers seeking a new world for themselves or military refugees who, pressed in the defeat of battle to the seacoasts of their original lands, chose to sail away upon the uncharted seas for lands unknown rather than lose face in admitting defeat to their enemies. Of sturdy and rugged stock, they

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[1] Otis Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1899), p. 1.

conquered and intermixed with the aboriginal Ainu--perhaps of Aryan origin--and developed the present race.

Until the year 1945 the Japanese proudly proclaimed that no conqueror had ever set foot on their soil. A more accurate statement would be that all would-be conquerors before the year 1945 either suffered defeat or landed in supposed victory (as did the early settlers) only to be assimilated into the native culture. Imbued with a strong sense of destiny, they have maintained a strongly nationalistic spirit through the years looking hopefully to the Utopian age of perpetual peace. This spirit has been maintained unbroken despite innumerable natural calamities of plagues, famines, tidal waves, earthquakes, and typhoons which decimated the population and confirmed the living in the conviction that fate was directing the affairs of man. Strongly animistic, the early inhabitants were rugged children of nature: from her they had gotten life; to her they directed their worship. Their indigenous religion was not something apart from themselves. It was the breath of their existence, the ghost of their fears, and the quintessence of their hopes. All nature was unified and man was a part of cosmic unity. Out of such spiritual homogeneity evolved the family, the clan, and ultimately the modern nation of almost a hundred million persons. A noted historian quotes the following brief outline of the partial development of the Japanese nation:

"Introduction - The Age of Deities and Legendary Heroes (Kami)
I. The Age of Clans (Uji) and Hereditary Titles (Kabane). (c.40 B.C.-A.D.645)
II. The Age of Court Nobles (Kuge). (592-1167)
III. The Age of the Feudal Barons (Buke). (1156-1867)
IV. The Modern Age. (1853-?)
  A. The opening of Japan, and the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate (Bakufu). (1853-1867)
  B. The Imperial Restoration, the Adoption of much of Western Civilization, the Struggle to Abolish the Unequal Treaties,

and the Establishment of a Constitutional Government. (1867-1894)"[1]

In 1895 Japan took her place among the modern nations of the world as a formidable military power following her victory over China. Her Constitution in 1889 declared the Emperor to be the supreme head of the nation, with the Imperial Diet responsible directly to him. The same was true for the Privy Council and Elder Statesmen—the former were appointed by and directly responsible to the Emperor; the latter were an unofficial group which had directed the reorganization of the government and formed a kind of advisory cabinet. The Army and Navy were under direct Imperial control.[2] Hence, when Japan entered the family of nations she was unquestionably a most strongly united nation. The secret of her solidarity is to be found in a study of her governmental structure and the unending devotion of the populace to her indigenous religious institutions at the center of which is the Emperor symbolizing the presence of the gods and goddesses in perpetual harmonious accord with the nation.

A detailed review of governmental structures is not the purpose of this study. And yet they are so closely enmeshed with the rise and expansion of her indigenous religion that it is impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins. That is true whether the study is addressed to the patriarchal, military or constitutional period.[3] In any division or period of the nation's existence, whether in dim, mythological antiquity

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[1] Robert Karl Reischaur, Early Japanese History, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937), Part A, pp. 1-4.

[2] Kenneth Scott Latourette, The History of Japan, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 116.

[3] Ernest Wilson Clement, A Short History of Japan, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 2.

or in modern times, the consolidation of all forces around one common objective has been supreme. That objective has always been the unification of the people into one family possessed of common political beliefs and consecrated to the espousal and propagation of those spiritual values which first brought the nation into being and subsequently became the heart and soul of that nation. The feudal period from 1156 A.D. to the Imperial Restoration of 1867 witnessed the lowest ebb of Japan's spiritual dynamics. It is sufficient for our study merely to say that although dual control existed in that period the divine-pattern of government was never fully destroyed nor was religion completely separated from the state despite repeated efforts to attain that end. With Hydra-like fecundity that indigenous politico-religious body perpetuated itself despite grievous wounds inflicted by feudalism and civil strife, and with each succeeding victory over foes within became increasingly strong to meet its foes from without.

Christianity (excluding Nestorianism) has always been a serious menace to the undisturbed tranquility of ultra-nationalism anywhere; in 1867 upon the establishment of the theocracy in Japan and the admission of foreign Christian nations within her borders, ideological clashes were inevitable. For the universal appeals of Christianity cannot long be silenced by the babel of non-moral and unChristian nationalism. Nor has pure Christianity yielded to control whether in Rome, Japan, or the United States. When the national Constitution was granted under Emperor Meiji, freedom of religious observances was enunciated. It was provided in the Restoration, however, that religious teachings should not be promulgated by the national schools. But, it was further decreed, Shinto was not to be considered a religion and, therefore, could and should be

taught in the schools! It was with just such juggling of facts that Protestant Christianity had to struggle through its all-too-short time in Japan prior to the first stages of the recent world war. The story of that struggle has been told on the beaches of Tarawa, Saipan, and Iwo Jima; it has been told in the suffering of countless Christians of two nations whose hearts and loyalties are not governed solely by the governments of either nation. It is a story "told" and yet unfinished.

The greater and uninterrupted story of the coming of a Kingdom of Love and Peace through Jesus Christ is that story to which the Church Universal must address herself. The question with which this study proposes to deal is: Is the present "Church of Christ in Japan", which is known also as the "United Church of Japan", properly constituted for the fulfilling of that high mission?

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

The people of Japan take pride in looking backward to the glories of her yesterdays when there was, supposedly, perfect cosmic unity. The realm of the gods and goddesses whose beneficence produced the peoples and lands of the Rising Sun was not the "without form and void" locale of the Christian God Who, in the form of a mere nebulous spirit, "moved on the face of the deep". It was a bridge--the very bridge of heaven--the bridal path of the sky, upon which stood the divine progenitors, the male Izanagi and the female Izanami, who, in an orderly fashion, planned and laid the foundations of a world that could not but be <u>one world</u>.

The people of Japan look forward to that golden era when all peoples shall be gathered into a peaceful family who will live in perfect accord beneath the shelter, security and unity of the roof of <u>one</u> house. Imbued in ancient times with a sense of messianic destiny which was born of a mythology that deified its rulers and elevated its people above the rest of the human race, they forged upon the anvil of feudal servitude from queer strains of religious beliefs that god-intoxicated, ethnic cult, the "way of the gods", which seeks ultimate national unity. Whether this cult, known as Shinto, should be considered a major religion has been debated; its operation for nearly two millennia in accommodation to Confucianism, then Buddhism, and finally Christianity, and its recent division into sect and state Shinto have made for it a place among scholars as a non-Christian religion with which to reckon.

Shinto is literally Kami no Michi--"the way of the gods". It is a nature-cult centering in worship of the Imperial-god-Ruler and his ancestors, and in worship of ancestors generally. Loyalty is its foundation stone: to the Emperor and nation, to one's lord, and to duty. It does not stress filial piety as strongly as does Confucianism, for instance, but it makes up for this in recognizing the lawful place of one's superiors in life and of the controlling influence of the dead over the affairs of the living. It is polytheistic, has no strict moral code, no doctrines of Heaven and Hell (for it has no "sacred Scriptures", only various books of records and history), no doctrine of sin--and consequently none of redemption, no infallible priesthood (only shrine ministrants), is freer of idol worship than is Buddhism, and is fairly tolerant of other religions. Indeed, some scholars have insisted that Shinto is not, in fact, to be classed as a religion. This view must not be taken seriously, however, for while its mythology cannot pass unquestioned we must recognize that the romantic tales of the Kojiki, a book of ancient records, represent the deep longings of the nation for religious certainty and for an explanation of life which they could not find within themselves. It makes little, if any, room for prayer in the Christian sense of intercession but has lengthy liturgies. The early Shintoists said that a moral code was all right for the Chinese for they were a bad people, but that the Japanese were good already and did not need a code of morals! Hitomaru, a Japanese poet, says:

> Japan is not a land where men need pray,
> For 'tis itself divine:. . . .[1]

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[1] Basil Hall Chamberlain, Japanese Poetry, (London: J. Murray, 1911), p. 60.

Her "sacred Scriptures", as has been pointed out, are but records of the past told in romantic tales. Chief among her records are the Kojiki, written about 712 A.D., and the Nihonji, 720 A.D. These early records profess to contain the story of creation and to show the development of the Japanese--their Ruler, land, and people--subsequent to their being "born" of the gods. There is no evident strain of imagination as men become gods, or as gods and goddesses behave like human beings, begetting children, killing (even their own offspring!), and dying! To put the matter mildly, there is not much moral uplift to be found in these stories but one must confess that their purpose is accomplished--if the stories are accepted as true; namely, the Japanese Emperor is shown to be a descendant of the gods, and the people and the country are divine. This is, of course, the purpose of the whole undertaking: so to impress the "divinity" of the State upon the people that their very religious devotions will be directed toward totalitarian ends as well as toward satisfying their quest for "truth". Thus, every loyal Shintoist is a loyal Japanese subject: almost every loyal Japanese subject is a loyal Shintoist![1]

Shinto has always been "an opiate to the people" of Japan. Conversely, it has also been a stimulant which has driven its adherents madly but blindly forward in a patternless maze toward the feverish dream of world unity, with needless suffering and disharmony perpetrated under the meaningless and tyrannical banner of making ready the "way of the gods", whose ways were supposed to be the ways of peace and unity! This indigenous religion has had to make numerous adjustments in its efforts either to subdue or to modify foreign religious influences introduced to the

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[1]Earl Van Best, "State and Religion in Japan" (Unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1942), pp. 13-14.

country.

When Confucianism came from China into Japan very early in the Christian era there was little demand for adjustment to Shinto. The latter being the indigenous religion of the Japanese, development without name or form had been realized and its practice was universal among the masses of the common people who were illiterate; the former appeared first at the Imperial Court through the media of written Chinese characters and an ethical code--neither of which was immediately attractive to the unlettered animists who constituted the rank and file of the nation. Excursions to the Continent which effected the introduction of Confucianism may have resulted in a modification of the local nature-cult in the matter of stressing the family system and the giving of centrality to the Emperor as spiritual head of the people. However, the rise of such teachings does not coincide with the introduction of Chinese influence entirely, and it is highly probable that the fundamentals of ancestor worship and reverence for the chief-clan ruler as kami, or god, may have been an importation of the original settlers antedating the influx of Confucian influence from China. It is true that Confucianism profoundly affected ancestor worship and tended to clarify the Japanese conception of god or kami.[1] Too, it worked favorably toward preparing the way for Buddhism for:

> By introducing the love of learning, Confucianism had partly prepared the way for Buddhism. As early even as the first century there were some Chinese scholars in Japan; but it was toward the close of the third century that the study of Chinese literature first really became fashionable among the ruling class. Confucianism, however, did not represent a new religion; it was a system of ethical teachings founded upon an ancestor worship much like that of Japan. What it had to offer was a kind of social philosophy, an explanation of the eternal reason of things.

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[1]Daniel Clarence Holtom, National Faith of Japan, (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner Co., 1938), p. 31.

> It reinforced and expanded the doctrine of filial piety; it regulated and elaborated pre-existing ceremonial; and it systematized all the ethics of government. In the education of the ruling classes it became a great power and has so remained down to the present day. Its doctrines were humane, in the best sense of the word; and striking evidence of its humanizing effect on government policy may be found in the laws and maxims of that wisest of Japanese rulers - Iyeyasu.[1]

The sixth century of the Christian era marked the first test of the native religion of Japan by a foreign religion. Buddhism was introduced from Korea about 552 A.D. and fell into almost immediate disfavor since its arrival coincided with natural calamities popularly associated in the minds of the populace with the presence of foreign gods who had aroused the anger of the local nature-gods. The newly introduced religion reached such disfavor that the image of the Buddha was cast into a canal and the whole Buddhistic religious system was for a time anathematized.[2] However, the ruling family was not slow in seeing a golden opportunity for national cultural advancement in the adoption of Buddhistic-Korean learning, and so means for furthering its peaceful transplantation were devised. Steps were taken to unify or regulate religious forces operative in both the native cult and foreign Buddhism.

Among those steps were the selection of a name for the native religion and an adjustment of the saints of Buddhism to the local gods. Dr. Kagawa has written of this:

> When Buddhism was first introduced in 552 A.D. from China through Korea, it clashed with Shinto. But Kobo Daishi and Saicho, fathers of the Buddhist faith in Japan, basing their view on a theory of the manifestation of reality, taught that the Shinto gods were incarnations of the Great Buddha. In

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[1] Lafcadio Hearn, Japan, an Attempt at Interpretation, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), pp. 207-208.

[2] Arthur Lloyd, The Creed of Half Japan, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1912), p. 173.

> course of time Shinto was thus absorbed into the Buddhist system and, down to the Meiji Restoration in 1867, a period of about 1,300 years, there was no distinction between Shinto and Buddhism.[1]

Buddhism was a thousand years old and had through circumstances been forced to make many adjustments to the religions of India, China, and Korea in its slow journey to Japan. Therefore, it was but another in a long series of compromises when it was "discovered" that no cause for friction existed between Shinto and Buddhism since the gods of the former were actually reincarnations of the Buddha! Thus history witnessed the Japonization of Buddhism--its conversion to Shinto in a sense--with the result that Japanese Buddhism is unlike that of Buddhism anywhere else in the world. The matter of primary importance to the ruling family was that harmony should prevail at any cost and that the emperor-myth should be preserved inviolate. By clever manipulations like those mentioned above serious clashes between Shinto and Buddhism have been kept to a minimum with dual allegiance to both systems maintained by many. This near-union of Buddhism and Shinto was co-operation with compromise: in compromise Buddhism lost its soul (that is, as compared to its former character in Korea, China, and India) but guaranteed its perpetuation under the ultimate domineering influence of Shinto--particularly after the Meiji Restoration in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The introduction of Christianity created problems unlike those attendant upon the introduction of Confucianism or Buddhism. While the founders of all these religions were Oriental, the international character of Christianity and other qualities, including the doctrine of the

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[1]Toyohiko Kagawa, Christ and Japan, trans. William Axling (New York: Friendship Press, 1934) pp. 72-73.

Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, have made for difficulty of adjustment to or amalgamation with any other religion. The only near-exception to this statement is found in the introduction of Nestorian Christianity into Japan at the beginning of the eighth century and its apparent absorption into the stream of national non-Christian life. The exact date of this contact is not known, but it is believed that almost immediately upon the introduction of Nestorianism to China it was transplanted into Japan both by Japanese students of Confucianism who went to China for study and by one or more Persians who entered Japan from China. A noted student of Nestorianism says of its introduction to Japan:

> . . . .facts prove that overland communications did exist between Syria and China sufficiently to permit of the coming of the Nestorian missionaries in 635 A.D., and it is no wonder they . . . . [came] . . . . to Japan within a century after their arrival at the capital of China.[1]

A Persian physician by the Japanese name of Rimitsu (known also by the Chinese name of Li-mi or Mi-li) is said to have arrived from China in 736 A.D. and, becoming a member of the Imperial Court, made an honored name for himself, his profession, and for Christianity. History does not record what became of this physician but it appears that Emperor Shomu (724-748 A.D.) respected his presence at Court, while Empress Komyo used his medical ability in promoting a kind of public health program and was herself converted to Christianity.[2]

Nor do we know the whole story of the gradual absorption by

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[1]P. Y. Saeki, The Nestorian Monument in China, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1916), pp. 64-65.

[2]John Stewart, Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1928), p. 189.

Buddhism and Shinto of Nestorian Christianity. But we have reason to believe that its influence, while never great in converting masses into open declarations of allegiance, was such that perhaps millions were influenced by it indirectly. Perhaps one of its greatest benefits was its modification of Shinto and Buddhism--the latter becoming, in a sense, fertile ground for the planting of Jesuit Christianity in the sixteenth century. Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa says on this subject:

> I am convinced that if Japan were Christianized the Shingon sect of Buddhism would be the first to set up the cross in its temples and worship it without any sense of wrench or inconsistency. There are Japanese scholars who believe that when Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect, visited China he was greatly influenced by Nestorian Christianity which had been brought to China in the seventh century by missionaries . . . . The fact that the Nestorian influence of thirteen hundred years ago still survives in the Buddhist temples in the form of prayer impresses me not only with the influence of Christianity but, even more, with the profound way in which the psychology of prayer is implanted in the human heart.[1]

In 1549 Francis Xavier landed at Kogoshima where he undertook the evangelization of Japan. He was accompanied by a Japanese convert whom he had met in India and by several other helpers who assisted him in planting the seed of Roman Christianity in soil already made fertile by more than eight hundred years of subdued Nestorian influence. It is said that immediately upon his landing he displayed an image of the Virgin and the Child and the people fell down in worship before it. Such success followed the earnest efforts of Xavier and his co-laborers that, although he was in the country only two years, an estimated half million souls were converted to Roman Catholic Christianity within thirty years.

Factors which facilitated this phenomenal growth included:

1. The preparation of the soil by Nestorianism which, although lost as

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[1]Kagawa, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

a separate movement, wielded an abiding, if perverted, Christian influence over the Empire for more than a thousand years.

2. Similarity of Catholicism to Buddhism in:
   a) Priesthood,
   b) Temple ritual,
   c) Clerical dress and adornments,
   d) Veneration of saints and relics.
3. The practice of mass conversions under Constantine-like Nobunaga, a local dictator, who, although he never succeeded in obtaining the coveted title of "Shogun", exercised the powers of Shogun and sought to use Roman Christianity as a means of stamping out Buddhism which he ardently hated. Mass baptisms without regard to the state of grace or intelligent understanding of the rite by "candidates" who submitted made a large roster of converts in a unified Church; they also made for internal weakness which was unable to resist outside obstructionists who later sought to eradicate Christianity.

When Nobunaga died he was succeeded by Hideyoshi who hated Christianity as Nobunaga had hated Buddhism. He gave himself completely to the task of wiping out every trace of foreign influence as reflected in Roman Catholicism. Persecutions incident upon this effort of his--and carried on by his successors until as late as 1829 when seven persons are said to have been crucified at Osaka--resulted in the death of an estimated quarter of a million persons. These persecutions, accompanied by the infliction of death by the cruelest of known means, and including the crucifixion of twenty-six persons in Nagasaki in 1597, grew out of such political maneuvers as were mentioned above together with:

1. The circulation of a non-disproven rumor that the Jesuit missionaries were but the forerunners of the soldiers of foreign empire

builders.

2. The distasteful foreign nature of Romanism as seen in:

   a) Foreign priests,

   b) Liturgical use of Latin instead of Japanese,

   c) Open allegiance to the Pope, a foreigner,

   d) Weakening of devotion to the gods of Shinto,

   e) Incompatability of feudalism with Christianity with its doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,

   f) Impossibility of effecting national unification with a strong, internationally-minded foreign religion claiming the consecrated devotion of masses of the people.

Since this Roman type of Christianity could not accede to the demands of nor co-operate with non-Christian government without compromising its convictions, it chose to die in the victory of official expulsion from the nation rather than to live in the defeat of official national absorption by Shinto. This act of choosing to suffer expulsion followed perhaps the greatest suffering ever inflicted upon a single people because of their Christian belief. Up and down the land the pale ghost of Death galloped through cities, villages, hamlets, and countryside, leaving behind multitudes of bleeding, broken, maimed, starved, and crucified Christian folk who worshipped as they died, lifting their faces and voices skyward under the mocking shadows of the Buddhas and the gods of Shinto. A few recanted under the threat of barbaric torture, many of whom devised means of appearing to recant in order to live and propagate the Christian faith in secret, but the vast majority of accused Christians testified as they faced certain death that it is better to die in unbroken allegiance to the Christian faith than to live a traitor to

Christ.

In 1624 strong pressure from the feudal Tokugawa government officially closed Japan to foreign nations. Christianity was banned, foreigners were expelled, and the nation settled down to a period of enforced feudal isolation of about two hundred and fifty years. During this time the construction of sea-going vessels was prohibited lest Japanese sailors venture overseas to foreign countries where hated Christianity and its foreign devotees existed. Except for a few contacts with the Chinese and Dutch and some instances of shipwrecked persons touching her shores or of a few of her nationalists venturing beyond the proscribed limits of overseas sailing, Japan slept the self-induced sleep of isolation from which she falsely believed she had banished every trace of Christianity. Unable to force the Jesuits to co-operate in a nation-wide program of Japonization of every activity--with the Shinto State as supreme--she ruthlessly wiped out every visible trace of organized "foreign religion" and banned its rebirth, saying:

> "So long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan; and let all know that the King of Spain himself, or the Christians' God, or the Great God of all, if he violate this command, shall pay for it with his head."[1]

Ultra-nationalism which grew out of and at the same time fostered Tokugawa feudalism was incompatible with Christianity and so one contending power had to go. It was Christianity--at least officially so. For it was as true then as now that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church", and that seed, so heroically and extravagantly planted, could not but ultimately spring up into a bountiful harvest of love for the

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[1]Galen M. Fisher, Creative Forces in Japan, (Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, New York, and The Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Missions, West Medford, Mass., 1923), p. 146.

Lord of the Harvest! Banned officially, Christianity "went underground": the Lord's Prayer was recited privately in homes and was handed down from generation to generation, while symbols used in Christian worship were passed on as talismen from parent to child until original meanings became lost; worshippers cunningly devised means of carving the Christian Cross or a faint resemblance of the Virgin and Holy Child into Buddhist images--so that as prayers were said, hands folded or heads bowed before them, secret adoration was accorded them. Unable to unify the nation with an organized foreign religion operative in her midst, feudal Japan consigned Christianity to the Cross. Jesuit Christianity, unable to disprove the rumor that it was but the forerunner of European empire-builders and mistaking mass conversions with their bid for popularity as the quickest method of transforming a nation, saw too late its human error, repented as it suffered, bled and almost died--repented and refused to die. It repented and refused to bow to the mandates of the Shinto State--and counted its crosses, graves and remains of charred bodies in the hundreds of thousands. There could be no co-operation with Shinto which sought to subjugate and control. It was Christ or Shinto. Believing that "whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it",[1] early Christians, unlike the Nestorians a thousand years earlier, refused to compromise, and as they died they prayed for their enemies; those who compromised and lived to practice this faith in secrecy, prayed for the dawning.

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[1] Luke 17: 33.

CHAPTER II

THE DAWNING

Japan's long night of feudal isolation begun early in the seventeenth century was suddenly ended in 1853. If it is true that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword",[1] it must remain forever true that the cannons bristling from the decks of Commodore Perry's squadron of men-of-war in Yedo Bay in 1853 were but the answer to the military force used by the Tokugawa dictators of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in seeking to exterminate Christianity. And it must also remain true that God uses the wrath of man to praise Himself.[2] For while the mission of Perry had as its objective the opening of Japanese ports purely as a convenience in coaling vessels of the United States in her trade with China, it was inevitable that, once admitted, the American people should begin anew the evangelization of Japan.

When Perry demanded that Japan open her doors to the United States he found a divided nation. It was more divided than he knew. Despite more than two centuries of almost complete isolation from the rest of the world, the nation had been torn by feudal strife, civil wars, and constant agitation over the exercise of absolute political and religious authority. The Emperor in Kyoto was regarded as head of the country; actually he was a mere spiritual figurehead symbolizing the

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[1] Matt. 26: 52.

[2] Psalms 76: 10.

unbroken succession from time immemorial of Shinto deities, while the Tokugawa Shogun with an endless retinue of Daimyo (feudal lords) ruled temporally from his northern capitol at Yedo. Dual control was the order of the day for although feudal lords had succeeded in grasping control temporally, the Emperor, although he remained within his western capitol as a virtual prisoner of feudal dictators, still exercised the office of absolute spiritual head of the people and as such was respected and feared. Yet he was powerless to rule as long as the power of the Shogunate remained unbroken; the Shogun on the other hand while absolute militarily was impotent spiritually and, therefore, unable to unify the nation around himself. Either the office of feudal Shogun or the spiritual headship of the Emperor had to decline--or, perhaps, come to an end. The former did both. Conversely, as the Shogun's power declined and ceased to exist, the Emperor's authority and temporal power multiplied. In this shift of power appeared one of the rare paradoxes of history.

The United States, misinformed as to who was the real ruler of Japan, actually delivered its appeal to the Shogun for an open door--addressing him as "the Emperor of Japan". Moreover, the initial steps of negotiating treaty provisions for commercial relations between the two nations were taken with the Shogun who was understood by the United States to be the Emperor. When it became known throughout Japan that the Shogun had effected treaties making legal the opening of the Empire to trade with the United States, public opinion was so bitterly opposed to such agreements that the Shogun's power began steadily to decline. Despite the pressure of public sentiment for the abdication of the Shogun and the recognition of the Emperor as both temporal and spiritual head of the nation because of dissatisfaction over the admission of foreigners, it is

significant that with few exceptions all provisions of those treaties were kept when the Emperor entered upon the stupendous task of modernizing a nation which, in decadent feudal isolation, had lagged behind the rest of the world for more than two hundred years.

The transition from Tokugawa feudalism under the Shogun to a theocracy under the Emperor was dictated, as we have already seen in part, by circumstances over which there was, apparently, no human control. That is to say, the Shogun had, in the eyes of the uninformed populace, betrayed his country by admitting the despised foreigner. It was out of the question to try to continue his regime for, having "lost face", the very foundations upon which his political edifice had rested were removed cataclysmically and the structure, of which the Shogun was but a symbol, could not but fall. Moreover, the sudden display of military might by the United States as her battleships steamed up and down Yedo Bay convinced the ruthlessly awakened Samurai (warriors) that resistance was senseless and co-operation with compromise far better than national suicide. Thus it was deemed proper to forsake the old dream of national unity by isolation under feudal control of economic and political life, with spiritual headship vested in a kami or "god ruler" who was too remotely removed from his subject either to understand or serve them. And so the "sleeping giant" awoke in the rosy dawn of a new day, realized that it had slept overtime, discovered that its neighbors were powerful in military might, and it knew--as it may have suspected at times during its fitful nightmare of self-enforced isolation, that unity and isolation are not synonymous terms.

In one of the debates held in the Shogun's Council in 1854, perhaps during Perry's second visit and while an answer was awaited aboard

the American battleships, the following is said to have been a part of the decision reached at this crucial period:

> ". . . . If we try to drive them away they will immediately commence hostilities, and then we shall be obliged to fight. If we once get into a dispute, we shall have an enemy to fight who will not be easily disposed of. He does not care how long he will have to spend over it, but he will come with several myriads of men of war and surround our shores completely; however large a number of ships we might destroy, he is so accustomed to that sort of thing that he would not care in the least. In time the country would be put to an immense expense, and the people plunged in misery. Rather than allow this, as we are not the equals of foreigners in mechanical arts, let us have intercourse with foreign countries, learn their drill and treaties, and, when we have made the nation as united as one family, we shall be able to go abroad and give lands in foreign countries to those who have distinguished themselves in battle."[1]

It was impossible for those who ultimately decided to yield to the demands of foreigners for "the open door" to know of the far-reaching reasons why yielding was actually the only thing they could do. First, the most important factor was Japan's internal political weakness in the change of public opinion regarding the Shogun which we have already noted. Added to that was the internal dissension which extended down the military-political-economic shaft of the social structure perpendicularly from the Shogun to the Daimyo (feudal lords) to the Samurai (warriors) to the Ronin (unattached knights) to the peasants and to the merchants. Each with a grievance, whether of military or financial nature, was either restless or rebellious. With the intensification of discord in this area of national life, aloofness to the demands of foreigners could not have prevented their free entrance. Yet let it be said to the credit of the United States, Russia, Holland, England and other nations that not one of them forcibly entered Japan to annex her as a colony although it became

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[1] William Gray Dixon, The Land of the Morning, (Edinburgh: J. Gemmell, 1882), p. 85.

common knowledge that she was defenseless against modern instruments of warfare at this time. A great force in establishing the theocracy was the unpopularity of the Shogun, together with the widespread conviction that merely replacing him in office with another would serve only to perpetuate a system--the feudal system--which was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory.

Second, the Emperor was the only common authority to contending war lords, military factions, and clans. They did not trust each other; they feared to trust the Shogun any longer. The emperor was the only symbol of national unity which had remained successfully unchallenged through the ages. Moreover, the aging Emperor Komei was known to be definitely anti-foreign, a fact which increased his popularity with the vast majority who deeply resented the Shogun's action in admitting foreigners. The Emperor, the direct descendant of the gods and goddesses, was the only one who, in the face of a national crisis, could bring the nation to face a common objective with unity of purpose. Had he been ruler in fact at the time Perry made his first overture in 1853 and had there been sufficient modern military equipment available the story of Japan might be different today. A divided nation made for easy foreign penetration.

The establishment of the theocracy represented a kind of religious revival and, as in other revivals recorded in history, fanatical aspects were not absent. Some of them will be reviewed later in our treatment of Shinto and its demands for a united Christian Church.

Third, a few unfortunate international incidents at this period (1850-1870) played into the hands of the Emperor and correspondingly weakened the position of the Shogun. One day a British citizen, a

Mr. Richardson, rode through the pompous procession of the Lord of Satsuma and was killed by one of the attending warriors. It has been said that Mr. Richardson did not know it was against the rules of Japanese courtesy to break through a formal procession on horseback! The British Government was incensed and demanded the surrender of the warrior who had done the murder. When the Japanese refused to surrender the warrior the British fleet promptly bombarded the town of Kagoshima--the place where Xavier had undertaken his work of Christianizing Japan in 1549! Anti-foreign feeling was intense and later the Lord of Choshu, in an act of loyalty to the Emperor, fired upon the American, French, and Dutch merchant ships passing through the straits at Shimonoseki. When reparations for damages were demanded of and refused by the Shogun, fleets of the countries involved, together with the British, bombarded the forts at Choshu.

> In 1866 Sir Harry Parkes, the British envoy to Japan, offered to remit part of the fine which had been imposed by the allied Powers upon Choshu, provided that the Mikado ratified the treaties signed on his behalf, but against his wishes by the Shogun. To this Komei consented.[1]

When the Emperor thus gradually came into national prominence superseding the Shogun in temporal power, it was but a mere formality when headship of the nation in matters temporal was assumed by him who was already recognized as the "son of heaven". Upon Emperor Komei's death, his young son, Mutsuhito, known in history as Meiji, ascended to the throne and, from 1867 when the last Shogun resigned his office, was absolute ruler. ". . . . the Shogunate was at an end. Once more the government of Japan was, in fact and not in political fiction, a theocracy."[2]

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[1]Robert P. Porter, Japan, the Rise of a Modern Power, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1919), p. 108.

[2]Ibid., p. 109.

The "Meiji Restoration" or "Revolution" beginning in 1867 marks the emergence of Japan as a modern state. Before that time she had experienced alternating periods of unity and discord; from this date she forged steadily forward under the unified efforts of leaders who pledged their loyalties to the gods of Shinto and followed implicitly the wishes and commands of their beloved Emperor--the descendant of the gods and goddesses. "Shintoism, which proclaimed one unchangeable, supreme ruler for Japan, became at last, in 1867, the generative power of the Meiji revolution which ushered in modern Japan."[1]

Young Emperor Meiji was more pro-foreign than had been either his father, Emperor Komei, or any of the Tokugawa Shoguns. Influenced strongly by political advisers in his revamped government who saw the advantage of international co-operation, he sought earnestly to pacify contending factions while inaugurating modern reforms which would completely transform and solidly unite the political, economic, social, and religious life of the Empire in its appearance in the family of nations. The reforms, briefly, were:

1. The removal of the capitol from Kyoto to Yedo, the former seat of the Shogun's government, which was renamed Tokyo (merely a reversal of the syllables of "kyo-to" to "To-Kyo").
2. The granting of a constitution (1889).
3. The reorganization of the Military, particularly of the Army, after the order of the French and German.

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[1] Danjo Ebina, "Our Cultural Heritage", Japan Speaks for Herself, ed. by Milton Stauffer ("Christian Voices Around the World"; New York: Published for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions by the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1927), p. 11.

4. The reconstruction of a modern Navy after the British pattern.
5. The development of a modernized educational system, with special emphasis on foreign languages and economics.
6. The encouragement of international trade.
7. The partial adoption of such western customs as the wearing of foreign clothes and the patronizing of foreign arts.
8. The revival and establishment of Shinto as the official religion of the theocratic state.

The revival of Shinto was accompanied by the disestablishment of Buddhism, the removal in 1873 of edicts against Christianity, and the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. "Freedom" as used here should not be confused with absolute freedom: this was freedom under law--freedom under a Shintoistic theocracy.

CHAPTER III

THE LIGHT OF A NEW DAY

The Meiji Restoration in 1867 christened Japan as a modern state and marked the beginning of a new day of hope for the Church of Jesus Christ in her earnest desire to reach the Japanese people with the Gospel. Closed for more than two hundred years to the Church, with armed peace maintained by the Tokugawa Government which had used both Buddhism and Shinto to its own nationalistic ends, the country had all but lost every visible evidence of Christianity. Here and there were to be found a few Christian symbols and medals formerly used to aid the performance of Jesuit divine worship, and there were a few families who perpetuated the use of the Lord's Prayer and portions of the Jesuit ritual. But for the most part Christianity had disappeared from the country, having been completely absorbed by Shinto and Buddhism or practiced in a perverted form secretly by those who cowered in fear for their lives and transmitted their ceremonial observances to descendants who preserved these outward forms of worship unaware of their real, spiritual meaning. Confucianism had been the greatest cultural and ethical influence in the life of the nation during its feudal isolation. It is noteworthy that much of Chinese culture which had been introduced to Japan early in the Christian era was, although subsequently lost to China, preserved to the world by Tokugawa feudal isolation while Christianity, introduced first by the Nestorians from China and later reintroduced by the Jesuits, was almost completely lost by persecution of the Tokugawa Shogunate or absorbed into the

Buddhist-Shinto national life of the Empire.[1] It remained for Protestant Christianity to face its test in Japan in a "reawakened" period--a period of comparative quiet with a minimum of organized opposition but with the millennium-old bid for the fusion of its effort with that of Shinto and other religious forces controlled by Shinto.

The year 1858 marked the opening of Japan to foreigners for residence. Earlier treaties dating back as early as 1854 had opened certain ports to American trade, while Russia, Holland, and England had also, in quick succession, gotten similar privileges. Later, Townsend Harris negotiated a treaty on behalf of the United States in 1858 opening many ports for residence of citizens of the United States. The treaty provided that:

> Americans in Japan shall be allowed the free exercise of their religion, and for this purpose shall have the right to erect suitable places of worship. No injury shall be done to such buildings, nor any insult be offered to the religious worship of the Americans.
>
> American citizens shall not injure any Japanese temple or Miya, or offer any insult or injury to Japanese religious ceremonies, or to the objects of their worship.
>
> The Americans and Japanese shall not do anything that may be calculated to excite religious animosity. The Government of Japan has already abolished the practice of trampling on religious emblems.[2]

Nineteen other nations obtained the same rights and, despite a few unfortunate incidents involving some of the Samurai and feudal chiefs with the newly admitted foreigners, peace and understanding prevailed.[3]

However, it is regrettable that in the early stages of their relations with Japan foreign nations should have been so unchristian in

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[1] Saeki, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

[2] Otis Cary, A History of Christianity in Japan, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), p. 107.

[3] Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, pp. 58-62.

treaty demands. The American historian might well point with pride to the fact that Japan, helpless and defenseless in military prowess, was not annexed as a colony by one or more of the powerful nations demanding entrance into her economic life. To the humble student of the Church of Christ in Japan it is most unfortunate that: (1) the country was opened within range of guns aboard battleships of the United States Navy; (2) so many nations (nineteen in number) should have flocked in such a frenzied fashion--like swine to their feed--for favorable treaties enabling them to prey upon a rudely awakened people who neither knew the value of their export goods nor possessed sufficient power to resist prohibitively high tariff schedules imposed as provisions of the treaties demanded; (3) whiskey and opium should have accompanied--and their use have been encouraged by--the white man, but it is commendable to Japan that strength of character forbade her becoming a victim to either vice; (4) the country should have been quickly drained of its gold and silver by Western chicanery in overpricing Western articles for exchange and taking advantage of the favorably low ration of gold to silver; (5) extra-territoriality should have accompanied so-called Christian nations abroad.[1] It is no wonder that "heathen" Japan should have implored the West, in treaty agreements, not to send either opium or missionaries to her shores!

Christian missionaries to Japan of the Protestant, Roman and Russo-Greek Churches appeared in the order named. Since this study of the Church of Christ in Japan directly concerns only the Protestant group, interest will be directed here chiefly, except to give, later, a few details of interests which of necessity overlap with non-Protestant groups.

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[1]Upton Close, Behind the Face of Japan, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Incorporated, 1942), pp. 71-72.

The Roman-Catholic group re-opened its work about 1860; the exact Russo-Greek date is difficult to determine but the year 1861 is close enough for our study here. The reasons for the lack of clarity in these dates are, respectively: (1) the sending of French Roman Catholic priests to minister to the spiritual needs of European Roman Catholics residing in treaty ports and their subsequent evangelization of the nationals; (2) the gradual assumption of missionary work by a chaplain to the Russian Consulate, "the Reverend Nicolai", who taught Christianity privately, baptizing his first convert in 1866. The work of Bishop Nicolai remains until today as a testimonial to his consecrated labors.

Protestant missionaries began their work in 1859. The honor of being the first Church to enter the country goes to the Protestant Episcopal Church. Within a year after this, several other Churches of the United States--the Presbyterian, the Reformed, and the Baptist--had begun work among Japanese nationals despite the fact that the laws against Christianity had not yet been repealed. In rapid succession other denominations opened missionary work until by the close of the century about forty different interpretations of the Protestant faith were being propagated. The Disciples of Christ opened their work in 1883. Protestant missions, for the most part representing England, the United States, and Westernism in general, became so popular throughout the Empire that for a time (about 1884) many statesmen and political leaders urged the official adoption of Christianity as the national religion and recommended that the Emperor himself receive baptism.[1] However, this period of popularity was short-lived, and reaction set in.

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[1]Alfreda Arnold, Church Work in Japan, (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1905), p. 15.

A famous Japanese minister and scholar, Bishop J. S. Motoda, says of this reaction:

> . . . . While it was predominantly a conservative reaction, one of its characteristics was discrimination. Western civilization and Christianity were subjected to severe analysis and criticism. Careful selection, rather than wholesale absorption, became the watchword. It was soon discovered that all representatives of the West were not like those missionaries who were admired and respected. Moreover it was found that so-called Christian countries did not act in accordance with the spirit of the Christ whom the missionaries preached.
>
> The West seemed able to supply an impressive conglomeration of things and ideals. With Christ came anti-Christ, with the missionaries came anti-missionaries, with the Holy Scripture came the bottle of whiskey. With the increase of knowledge of the Western world, with the development of facilities for communication and transportation between East and West, and with the revival of national pride, Christianity found itself without the prestige that for a brief moment had swept it into a position of wide but unstable popularity.[1]

Reaction against foreigners in general and against Christians in particular did not follow the pattern of opposition followed in the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century technological immaturity and infancy in the family of nations forced Japan, for a while, to tolerate foreigners and their religion for the sake of the mechanical progress they brought. However, as she became more and more self-sufficient industrially there was less necessity for dependence upon outsiders for guidance. Moreover, she learned her own military strength in military skirmishes with China for Formosa in 1872, with Korea in 1874, and again against China in 1894. As a result, she discovered that the foreign man and his ways constituted no justifiable cause for trepidation

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[1] J. S. Motoda, "Opportunities of the Japanese Church", Japan Speaks for Herself, ed. by Milton Stauffer ("Christian Voices Around the World"; New York: Published for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions by the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1927), pp. 78-79.

on her part.[1] With the dawning of international self-consciousness, Christianity ceased to appear as a foreign religion. Its international character was appreciated despite national repugnance at the ways and mannerisms of men of business and government from the West who too often represented Christianity unworthily. Conscious of the discrepancy between the claims made for Christianity and the lives of those who came from "Christian lands", Japan began to appreciate her own spiritual structure and renewed her determination to consolidate all things foreign to the complete unification of the nation. As a result, the element of spiritual reformation entered into the rebirth of the nation.

> The Restoration was at the same time a reformation. In emerging from the Asiatic hermitage to take our stand upon the broad stage of the world, we were obliged to assimilate much that the Occident offered for our advancement and at the same time to resuscitate the classic ideals of the East. . . . . As the word signifies, our restoration was essentially a return. The government once again assumed the form of an imperial bureaucracy . . . . Shintoism was proclaimed as the religion of the imperial household. . . . . liberty of conscience [was] granted . . . . to the entire nation, and Christianity was freed from the interdiction under which it had lain since the Jesuit insurrection of the seventeenth century.[2]

The "Reformation", begun in 1867 under Emperor Meiji continued for generations. As we have seen, it quietly made use of technological and cultural forces from the West while developing its own potentialities. As a result, the newer civilization of the West seemed for a time to be superimposed upon the ancient civilization of the East, whereas actually in time there came to be a sharp cleavage between the

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[1] Justin Balette, "Japan," The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII, (1910)

[2] Okakura-Kakuzo, The Awakening of Japan, (London: John Murray, 1905), pp. 162-164.

"old" and the "new" -- "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles . . . ."[1] -- and because of its international character Christianity towered above both as the peculiar resultant of the culture of neither.

The reformers did not repeat the error of the seventeenth century of trying to subdue or convert Christianity to their own immediate nationalistic ends; Christianity (and the term is here restricted to Protestantism) made no effort to mass-convert the nation. Nor did it seek by iconoclastic innovations to disrupt the nationalistic consciousness of the people. Higher loyalties were encouraged in the name of the one "Name which is above every [other] name"[2] while citizenship was presented in the light of responsibility to two worlds--the earthly and the heavenly. Christianity was carefully reintroduced as independently of denominational coloring as was humanly possible by missionaries who were appointed, sent out, and supported by denominational boards. Clashes between Shinto and Christianity on the one hand or between Christianity and denominationalism on the other were not noticeably present in the early days of missionary endeavor under the Meiji Restoration. However, one factor entered later into the message offering Japan Christianity in the nineteenth century which, ultimately, affected its acceptability: its unnecessary propagation of denominationalism. It was a characteristic as portentous of disunion and discord as had been European politics in Roman Catholic Christianity in the seventeenth century. It proved to be a hindrance and a stumbling stone of offense to Protestantism in the nineteenth century and ultimately precipitated the pressure of Shinto for a "United Church" in the twentieth century. A survey of Christian

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[1] Matt. 9: 17. [2] Phil. 2: 9.

objectives made in the year 1933 expresses concisely the relationship of the western church to the Japanese. But for the date of the report the reader might well believe it was written for the attention and action of Christians in the eighties and nineties. It reads as follows:

> At the very center of Japanese life lies imbedded the spirit of religion. They believe their Emperors rightly trace their lineage back to the gods. The centrality of the Imperial family is the most sacred thing in the nation. "The person of His Majesty is sacred and inviolable," says the Japanese Constitution.
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> Two forces are at work in modern Japan--one very old and one very new. The ancient culture of the East, introspective and self-possessed, dominates her thinking even in the presence of other and seemingly irresistible influences. The culture of the West, which delights in things and seeks safety in the multitude of its external accomplishments, is bidding for approval. Outwardly Japan has adopted the civilization of the West. One can hardly believe this is mere imitation. Face to face, or side by side, these two forces are at work. She must accept the new life according to her needs, but not in violation of her own genius. Her life is inclusive--she is seeking knowledge in all the world. She is quite unselfish, she will gladly share all her art and religion with others. She will as gladly learn from others, even at the cost of sacrificing ancient and sacred customs and forms. The life which now comes from the West is exclusive--it refuses to learn, it is aggressive and imperialistic. In self-defense, and in order to be respectable, Japan has been forced to separate from the rest of Asia and walk in the ways of the West.
>
> In order to gain wide acceptance Christianity may be called upon to modify many of its Western forms, and adjust its activities to the spirit and genius of the Japanese people. To a large extent this has been done, and the naturalizing process has proceeded to a point where Christianity is no longer looked upon as strange and alien.[1]

The instrument of the Imperial "reformation" near the end of the nineteenth century was Shinto. Having prepared the way for the downfall of the Tokugawa government and the restoration of the Emperor in the sixties, Shinto became the greatest single unifying force in the Empire.[2]

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[1]Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Fact-Finders' Reports, Japan, ed. Orville A. Petty (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933), VI, Supplementary Series, Part II, 11-12.

[2]Latourette, op. cit., p. 100.

A disestablished Buddhism and a young Christian movement tainted with Westernism and divided into denominations were powerless either to resist or to savour the "reformation". Japan entered the grand procession of modern nations at the end of the nineteenth century with a motley group of submerged religious bodies either vying with each other or torn by internal strife. At the forefront of Japan's columns floated the banners of Shinto resplendent in the glory of the goddess of the sun.

CHAPTER IV

VOLUNTARY STEPS TOWARD CHURCH UNION

The Nestorians first brought Christianity to Japan. They also brought the heresies and corruptions which had been accumulated and added in the name of Christianity through many centuries of adjustments to non-Christian cultures. They organized no churches and, so far as is known, promulgated no creed, yet the Nestorian influence has never died out of Japan.[1,2] If in 736 New Testament Christianity in all its beauty and purity--instead of Nestorianism--had been introduced, what a difference might have been made for the salvation of the Far East!

Roman Catholicism was brought to Japan in 1549 by Francis Xavier. That Jesuit "saint" was instrumental in so firmly planting Christianity in the land that despite persecutions hardly equalled anywhere in Christendom it has lived until this day. Churches were organized and creeds were promulgated under this type of Christianity but its foreign attachments together with its refusal to become Japonized resulted in its official extermination.

Protestant Christianity was brought to Japan in 1859. Unlike Roman Catholic Christianity which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been accused of being but the forerunner of military might of Europe, Protestantism appeared in the nineteenth century in the wake

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[1] Saeki, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

[2] Kagawa, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

of the display of military power by the United States (and subsequently by the British, French, and Dutch) and the advent of the Protestant missionary. The Protestant movement began its work with little, if any, visible evidence of concern for planting denominationalism within the newly opened "harvest field".

The first missionaries were the Reverend J. Liggins and the Reverend C. M. Williams of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Next, and but a few months later, came Dr. J. C. Hepburn (M.D.), a Presbyterian. All three had formerly been missionaries in China and knowing the Chinese language were able to learn the Japanese language fairly easily since Japanese makes use of Chinese characters in its written language. The subsequent arrival of the Reverend S. R. Brown, Dr. D. B. Simmons (M.D.), and the Reverend Guido F. Verbeck, all of the Reformed Church, and the Reverend J. Goble of the Baptist Church brought to four the total number of Churches from the United States representing Christianity there within less than a year after the opening of Japan by treaty to foreign residence. Other Churches sent out missionaries soon thereafter, but it is to the missionaries named above that much credit is due for the unselfish and generally undenominational type of work inaugurated in the presentation of the Protestant interpretation of Christianity. Their medical skill, linguistic ability, invention of the jinrikisha, and sympathetic understanding of and interest in education commanded for them the respect of the masses and made it relatively easy for them to commence their work of evangelization.[1]

The first Protestant Church in Japan was organized in 1872. It

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[1] Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, p. 83.

grew out of a student prayer-meeting in Yokohama and was undenominational in character.

> . . . . The first article of their creed showed a positive purpose to keep the Church as free as possible from the sectarianism of the West: "Our Church does not belong to any sect whatever; it believes in the name of Christ in whom all are one; it believes that all who take the Bible as their guide and diligently study it are the servants of Christ and our brethren. For this reason all believers on earth belong to the family of Christ in the bonds of brotherly love."[1]

This church with eleven charter members, nine of whom were students, was, as we have seen, undenominational in character. It gave Christendom many valuable leaders. Among them were: Yoichi Honda who became a bishop in the Methodist Church; Kajinosuke Ibuka who became president of Meiji Gakuin, a Presbyterian College; and Masahisa Uemura who became one of the most beloved pastors of the Presbyterian Church in Japan.[2]

They chose as the name of their Church: "The Church of Christ in Japan".[3]

The work of non-sectarian-minded foreign teachers furthered the Christian cause. Among them was E. W. Clark, a teacher of science in the city of Shizuoka in the seventies. He began his work as a teacher of science before the period of Christianity's popularity. When he

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[1]John H. DeForest, Sunrise in the Sunrise Kingdom, ("The Forward Mission Study Courses" Edited under the Auspices of the Young People's Missionary Movement; Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Department for Young People and Education, 1904), p. 114.

[2]Tetsu Yasui, "The Contribution of the Western Church", Japan Speaks for Herself, ed. by Milton Stauffer ("Christian Voices Around the World"; New York: Published for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions by the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1927), p. 44.

[3]Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, p. 90.

landed in Japan to take up his contract as teacher he discovered that a clause in the contract forbade his teaching anything regarding Christianity. He protested and was rebuffed, both by his Japanese interpreter and American friends who urged him to accept the contract as offered by the authorities. He was firm in his refusal, saying that it was an impossibility for a Christian to teach three years in the midst of a non-Christian people and not teach Christianity--and he refused to take the position unless the prohibitive clause were removed. He won his point, the clause was stricken from the contract, and the first Sunday he was in Shizuoka Mr. Clark conducted a Bible class! This independent work was carried on with enthusiasm for three years with the result that many souls were influenced for Christianity free of the restricting influence of narrow denominationalism.[1]

Another instance of a great Christian movement being inaugurated by a "layman" was that of Captain L. L. Janes and his work with the Kumamoto Band. As a retired officer in the United States Army Captain Janes started a school for boys in Kumamoto around 1870. For several years he made no effort to lead his boys into an open confession of their faith in Christianity. Finally he started a course of Bible instruction and later plead for open confessions of faith in Christ. The Christian movement he inaugurated spread like wild-fire for a time, with students holding dormitory prayer meetings, reading the Bible, weeping and confessing their sins. One Sunday in January, 1876, forty of these young men marched through the streets of Kumamoto to a hillside and there pledged themselves to lives of Christian service regardless of the

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[1]Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, p. 88.

suffering such a decision involved. Many of them were later called upon to suffer persecution for their Master; a few of them, under pressure, were not unfailingly faithful unto the end; but among them were several the influence of whose lives lives on until today. One such was Kanamori Tsurin who, after a long and bitter imprisonment, was sent to Doshisha, a Congregational school founded by Joseph Hardy Neeshima--a Japanese who as a lad had run away to the United States and returned to his native land as a minister. After a most unfortunate period of spiritual reaction occasioned by his study of German higher criticism, Kanamori Tsurin again found peace, became a lay evangelist, and devoted himself with untiring zeal to the preaching of the Gospel. One sermon--his famous "Three Hour Sermon" which he preached over a period of three and a half years to three hundred and twenty thousand persons--caused forty-eight thousand persons to sign cards signifying their further interest in being taught the Christian religion. His work in Japan, which was not strictly denominational, has been compared to the work of Paul in Asia Minor.[1]

From the Kumamoto Band came many men whose lives influenced the nation for generations and among whom was at least one college president--Danjo Ebina of Doshisha University.[2]

About the time of the removal of the edicts against Christianity (1873), a famous educator from the United States was instrumental in performing a great Christian service. Dr. W. S. Clark, president of Massachusetts Agricultural College, became an officer of the Hokkaido

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[1]Lois Johnson Erickson, The White Fields of Japan, (Richmond, Virginia: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1923), pp. 133-136.

[2]Yasui, op. cit., p. 44.

(northern part of Japan) Colonial Government and established an Agricultural School which later developed into the Hokkaido Imperial University. He stayed in Japan less than a year and yet he so completely devoted himself to teaching Christianity that a great number of students were won to Christ and carried on his work of lay evangelism. Among his students were Inazo Nitobe who became Under-Secretary of the League of Nations, and the Reverend Kanzo Uchimura who became one of the greatest of Japanese preachers.[1]

Thus we see that great good was done by early missionary leaders and lay teachers whose zeal for denominational structures was less than their love for Christian evangelism. Moreover, the Churches which first started work were not as interested in propagating ecclesiastical forms as they were in preaching and teaching the simple story of the Galilean.

Steps toward union of kindred Church bodies were taken first by the Presbyterians, then later by the Anglicans, Methodists, and other Churches which saw the need for close co-operation of related bodies. Such consolidation grew out of the conviction that unity stood for greater power, and though the creation of a single ecclesiastical body was not the immediate objective, independent denominational emphases were discouraged while the ecumenical nature of the Church was presented. As early as 1900 a Conference of Federated Missions was organized in Tokyo to work out plans for close co-operation within all the missions. The following prayer offered in one of the conferences expresses the sincere desire of the group for unity:

. . . . "All mighty God, our heavenly Father, who has purchased an universal church by the precious blood of thy son,

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[1] Ibid., p. 45.

> we thank thee that thou hast called us into the same, and made us members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Look now, we beseech thee, upon thy church and take from it division and strife and whatsoever hinders Godly union and concord. Fill us with thy love, and guide us by thy Holy Spirit that we may attain to that oneness for which thy son, our Lord Jesus, prayed on the night of his betrayal, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen."[1]

From this Federation developed a strong movement toward unified interdenominational missionary activity. The impact of its unity was noticeable in promoting Sunday schools, educational work, temperance, industrial welfare, Bible study, and international peace.[2] This was a spontaneous movement within the ranks of missionaries toward unified effort. Another movement, dissimilar in organization but having the same objectives, should be mentioned briefly.

The early desire for local autonomy on the part of Japanese Christians represented a step in the general direction of Church union. That is to say, as early as the nineties many Churches were making plans to become independent financially of the "Mother Churches" in the sending countries to the end that they might be entirely self-controlled. It is out of the question to try to sustain this point by quoting references to all religious bodies interested in becoming independent. The following quotation regarding the Congregational Church is, in general, representative of all the Churches:

> "The American Board's mission has from the first encouraged the churches that grew up in connection with its work to be

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[1] Fred Eugene Hagin, The Cross in Japan, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1914), pp. 354-355.

[2] Ibid., p. 355.

> self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. The Japanese Christians themselves have desired to possess the complete independence that comes to churches having these three characteristics, and a new move towards its attainment has now been taken. The Kumiai Churches and the mission appointed committees to consult concerning their mutual relations. The joint meetings of these two committees have been marked by the most pleasant feeling and have given an opportunity for a frank interchange of views. The desire of all was to find some feasible plan by which the churches should cease to rely upon a foreign missionary society for financial aid, so that the Kumiai Churches as a whole should be self-supporting.[1]

There was a strong feeling among missionaries and nationals that within churches and between denominations harmony should prevail. Sectarian divisions of the West were, at one time, unknown to the early Japanese Christians and, like the early believers spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, they founded their first church (1872) after the true Christian pattern. However, it was not long until, despite those forces mentioned above, denominational emphases became the order of the day, with the young church in its organizational structure becoming but a replica of the denominational Churches of the West.[2] Even as late as 1926 or 1927 a famous Japanese said:

> The ultimate end in all Christian work in Japan is not the creation of a church but the Christianization of a nation. Yet the Christian church is beyond doubt the most important agency in this work. Hence it is imperative to build up a vigorous Japanese church.[3]

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[1] The Christian Movement in Japan, Fourth Annual Issue, Published for The Standing Committee of Co-operating Christian Missions, ed. Daniel Crosby Greene (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House, 1906), pp. 193-194.

[2] U. Kawaguchi, "The Status of Christianity", Japan Speaks for Herself, ed. by Milton Stauffer ("Christian Voices Around the World"; New York: Published for the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions by the Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1927), p. 51.

[3] Kawaguchi, "Co-operation from the West", Ibid., p. 133.

By the end of the century, the Church having been operative only forty-one years, there were approximately seven hundred missionaries working in eight hundred mission stations among forty-one thousand Christians and representing thirty-nine denominations![1]

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[1] Cary, Japan and Its Regeneration, p. 113, 116.

CHAPTER V

FURTHER STEPS TOWARD UNION

Protestantism in Japan was represented by many sects at the beginning of the twentieth century. There was a minimum of friction among them, however, and at all times there were individuals and groups looking toward and working for the closer union of all Church bodies. It was earnestly hoped by the pioneer missionaries that the mistakes of denominational developments in the West might be avoided. It was their desire that the Church should be, humanly, the Japanese Church, and there is no available information to indicate that the early missionaries planned the founding of any ecclesiastical body which would violate the letter or spirit of the statement of belief adopted by the first Church the Japanese themselves founded in 1872. There is every reason to believe, on the other hand, that their consuming ambition was so to present Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, that His own Church which knows no boundaries of race, color or creed might be established. Like a weaver at his loom weaving a garment from multicolored threads, in self-abandon they passed back and forth across their barriers, artificial and real, seeking to weave for their Master a beautiful tapestry of love. These workers were not anti-denominational, for each worthily represented the Church which commissioned and sent him to Japan. But theirs was a loyalty that transcended ecclesiastical orders of men; because of that higher loyalty it was easy to point men to the Christ Who is the Head of

the Church. Apparently they saw no reason why unbroken loyalty to Christ could not be maintained by humble followers who maintained spiritual fellowship although they were members of differing branches of the Church. And yet they were not ultra-denominationalists. They neither sought to coerce all converts into earthly organizations nor erected tests of Christian discipleship which could not be met by the humblest true believer in Christ. In the early days of foreign missionary endeavor there were no evidences of the appearance of a movement toward a "United Church". Later steps toward union were a development for which there were many causes. Chief among these causes was the very nature of the Church itself.

There is a oneness of true believers in Christ which transcends barriers erected by men. It is a characteristic of the Church of Christ that its true members have fellowship one with the other while having fellowship with Him Who is the Head of the Church. It was inevitable that Christian believers in Japan should seek the unification of the Christian family. Another contributing cause was the political atmosphere in which the Church developed.

The "restored" Japanese state was controlled by and was at the same time the official expression of Shinto. There is nothing inherent in Christianity which makes its development in a non-Christian state an impossibility, but its supreme allegiance has always been given only to Jesus Christ. Christians do not always enjoy the blessings of "separation of Church and state"--the Founder of the Church Himself exhorted His hearers to render unto earthly rulers the allegiance due them--but where separation can be effected greater blessings are enjoyed by both

state and Church.[1] The Shinto-controlled Japanese nation up to 1941 went through alternating cycles of indifference toward, rejection, absorption, control, and expulsion of Christianity. Nestorianism was absorbed; Roman Catholicism (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) was treated with more or less of official indifference and finally expelled; Protestantism officially was treated first with indifference, then when expulsion was impossible because of its association with technological advantages of the West, its control was sought. There could not but be a clash between the universal appeal of the Church and the narrow nationalism of Shinto. Still another cause was that of co-operative efforts within the mission bodies to effect closer organic union.

The National Christian Council played an important part at this point. This Council, composed of delegates from twelve denominations, began its work in Japan about 1923. It sought to promote Church union, co-operation, and comity.

> Church union is deemed by most Japanese observers to be the ultimate, and church cooperation and comity the immediate goal. The attitude of the churches in church cooperation is influenced by the degree to which they regard church union as an immediate end.[2]

It appears that Japanese Christians were, when free of pressure from foreign mission boards, less interested in Church union of the type proposed by the National Christian Council than were the missionaries!

> "We think about it but not too much," a Japanese pastor remarked. "Everybody says it is a good thing, but they say

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[1] Luke 20: 25.

[2] Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Fact-Finders' Reports, Japan, op. cit., VI, Supplementary Series, Part II, p. 163.

> it as a form of etiquette," said another. These statements are typical of the response to our inquiry on church union by questionnaires and by interviews. The interest is quite general, but mainly from an academic point of view. Few were found who appeared disposed to take any active part in bringing it about. The writer is convinced that there is far less interest in church union in Japan than in America.
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> "The Church Union Promoting Society," a voluntary organization of Christian leaders, mainly laymen, holds occasional meetings, but has not been able to make any marked contribution to the solution of the problem.
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> . . . . . .
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> . . . . "Japanese are not keen on church union. There is, however, a trend toward it.". . . .
>
> The Japanese church leaders are not disposed to hold the missionaries responsible for delay in securing church union, though it is recognized that missionaries introduced the church organizations of the West. Mr. Egisawa, secretary of the National Christian Council, points out that in the initial efforts of the Presbyterians in Yokohama and the Congregationalists in Kobe in the 'seventies, they both tried to establish a Japanese Church of Christ on an undenominational basis. However, missionaries who replied to this question in the questionnaires were strongly of the opinion that the next step is not church union, but effort to bring about either the further union of related churches on the one hand, or increased cooperation between denominations on the other.[1]

Had Japanese Christians not been regimented into denominations by missionaries of the eighties and later they might have followed the New Testament pattern of the Church. On the other hand, after becoming adjusted to denominational patterns they were less eager to inaugurate a program leading to Church union than were the foreign missionaries.

Finally, the military desired a strongly united nation and "encouraged" Church union. This point actually is closely related to that above on Shinto. For Shinto was a tool used by the militarists to subjugate the entire nation into a kind of holy-slavery than which there is no worse curse socially, politically or religiously. Christianity has never had serious difficulty in facing any political or religious

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[1] Ibid., pp. 163-164.

system when methods of operation fair to both sides were afforded. It has had no serious difficulty with sect Shinto; it was state Shinto with its military dictators which disclaimed any kinship to religion while actually operating as an ultra-fanatical religion with which Christianity came to have serious clashes.

> The Christian church, in the eyes of Japanese officialdom, was an agency of propaganda and training. Its schools touched the lives and thinking of thousands of young people. Its services sealed Christian truths upon the hearts and minds of the worshipers. Therefore the police felt obligated to see that not too much love was talked about in places where Japanese young people and the public might hear, particularly love for one's enemies, forgiving love, and the love that conquers even over the might of armies.[1]

It was to the interest of Shintoistic militarists in the late thirties that national unity be effected as quickly as possible before Japan's venture into war with the Western powers. Victorious in her wars with China, Korea, and Russia, Japan as an ally of the United States in World War I learned from firsthand military experience that one secret of the strength of the democracies in war was a united spiritual front. Theoretically Japan had that unity when she attacked Shanghai in 1937. Actually when a quick victory over China failed to materialize and the months dragged on into years Japan's spiritual reservoirs ran much lower than did her reserves of manpower and materiel. Moreover, she met an unforseen obstacle which caused her great concern. That was the rising tide of Christian consternation at her "holy war" in interest of "The East Asiatic Co-Prosperity Sphere".[2,3] Furthermore, she had suffered

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[1]Richard Terrill Baker, Darkness of the Sun, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947), p. 57.

[2]Edwin O. Reischauer, Japan Past and Present, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 182.

[3]Baker, op. cit., p. 24.

terribly because of the Exclusion Act of the United States in 1924 and, since to the Shintoistic war-mongers Westernism and Christianity were practically synonymous terms, it was inevitable that Christianity should be placed under strict surveillance lest detrimental foreign influences seep in and interrupt her military plans. Therefore, it was imperative, from that point of view, that all Christian forces quietly and diplomatically be made subservient to the state. Extermination of Christianity was unthinkable because of the existence of a Christian potential of schools, hospitals, literature and personnel which could have, with leadership, offered that resistance which might have precipitated great national disunion. Thus while there were forces operative in the local churches which, no doubt, would have ultimately effected voluntary union, the military seized upon the idea of working from within the Church itself to reach its desired goal with a minimum of blame to itself and at no sacrifice of feverish haste. A long-time resident of Japan who is a former editor of the Japan Times, a daily newspaper in Tokyo, says of this:

> The church-reform movement was given the appearance of having originated among Japanese churchmen, but it was no secret that the army was behind the move . . . . The new "Christian structure" in Japan aims to unify all Christian denominations in one Japanese church, the creed of which will be made to conform with Japan's national thought. It is understood that, in accordance with the new creed, the Emperor will occupy the same position in the Japanese Christian Church as the Pope does in the Roman Catholic Church.[1]

A "Basis of Union" was offered the Church in 1929 by the National Christian Council. Dissension among the Church leaders prohibited its

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[1]Wilfrid Fleisher, Volcanic Isle, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday-Doran & Co., 1941), pp. 126-127.

adoption, however, and the Council continued its quest for an acceptable plan. It is not hinted here that the National Christian Council was acting under direction from the Government; it is believed that the Council was, at this time, operating voluntarily on behalf of what was conceived to be the best interest of the Kingdom of God. It has been said that the National Christian Council in Japan was one of the most effective Protestant federations anywhere in the world.[1] Much of the really important work of evangelization in Japan has been done, as we have seen, along undenominational lines. Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa--nominally a Presbyterian--has reached millions of souls in his Kingdom of God movement which is not a denominational enterprise. He was, and is, one of the greatest Christians in Japan when judged by the standard of good works on behalf of the downtrodden socially, economically, and spiritually. Had there been more leaders like Kagawa both among missionaries and nationals whose consuming desire was to perform deeds of love irrespective of denominational barriers, the modern-day story of union-under-pressure would have been different. A noted Church-Missions historian has given a remarkable resumé of conditions which lead up to the formation of the United Church. He says:

> Christianity recovered from the reverse which it suffered in the 1890's and grew in numbers and influence. Protestantism in its various forms attracted more adherents than either the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Church. The latter, indeed, suffered because of the disasters which overtook the parent body in Russia after 1917. Christianity was predominantly urban and Protestantism drew largely from former samurai and from the professional classes who were especially under the influence of the West. It was mainly of middle class stock. In Kagawa it produced a leader of more than national prominence who was widely acclaimed in Protestant circles in the

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[1] Baker, op. cit., p. 75.

> West. The Japanese desire not to be dominated by foreigners hastened the independence of the Protestant churches of financial aid from the churches of the West and the transfer of administrative posts from Westerners to Japanese. In 1940 and 1941, pressure from the government speeded up the elimination of aliens from administrative posts in the churches and of financial assistance from abroad and brought almost all Portestants into a new, united body called the Church of Christ in Japan. Christians, although less than one per cent of the population, were exercising an influence quite out of proportion to their numbers.[1]

The first official step by the Japanese Government toward unifying all Christian Churches was taken in 1940. On that date the Religious Bodies Law was passed, granting state recognition of Christianity on a basis of official equality with Buddhism and Shinto. On the surface this appeared to be a great victory for Christianity.

> There was nothing in the Religious Bodies Law which gave the government power to demand and enforce a union of Protestants in Japan. Apologists of the United Church in Japan today take pleasure in pointing out that the union arose spontaneously and could not have been coerced by the government because there was nothing in the Religious Bodies Law which specified it. They are right. What they do not tell is that the minister of education, in interpreting the law, read stipulations into the statute which forced the churches into union or dissolution.[2]

Under the provisions of this Law Christianity was recognized--but it was also controlled. It was left for the Government to decide what beliefs held by the Church were a menace to the state; a strict watch was to be kept over the registrations, organizations and appointments of the Church; and it was provided that official recognition would be denied any religious body whose membership fell below a specified number.[3]

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[1] Latourette, op. cit., p. 226.

[2] Baker, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

[3] Ibid., pp. 37-39.

Dr. R. T. Baker's brief analysis of the Religious Bodies Law is worthy of our study. He writes:

> To sum it all up, the Religious Bodies Law represented the legal relationship between the Christian Church (along with all other religious organizations in Japan) and the government. The law gave official state recognition to Christianity as one of the legal religions of Japan. It made churches and denominations juristic persons and exempted their property from taxation. It also made them toe the official line in matters of belief and creed. It gave the minister of education the final approval of church officials and organization, and, by virtue of the minister's "private judgment," it resulted in the formation of the now famous United Church of Christ in Japan.[1]

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity were not included in the "United Church". Each group received its own official recognition; each was considered to be a united body.

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[1] Ibid., p. 42.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH UNITED

The first official step toward uniting the various churches of Protestantism in Japan occurred in 1940. As outlined in the preceding chapter, the Religious Bodies Law was effected by the government granting Christianity official recognition but requiring certain compliance in return. Not long after Christianity was "recognized" it was given to understand that as an official member of the family certain rules must be observed--and many of those were new rules! Enforced subsequent to the passage of the Religious Bodies Law, these "rules" provide that:

1. The Churches were required to form themselves into one body. This body was caused to be directly under the supervision of the head of the United Church who had to be an ordained man elected by the Minister of Education. This person was virtually absolute in power over the Church as related to pastoral appointments, dismissals, punishments, etc., and he was responsible directly to the Japanese Government.
2. Denominational names were banned. All Church groups were required to be brought into one juristic body the name of which was, when translated, "The United Church of Christ in Japan". A local congregation of the, say, Methodist denomination might in its own village use the name "Methodist" but actually its connectional

relationships were henceforth to be with the United Church.

3. Bowing toward the Imperial Palace in Tokyo as an act of obeisance to the Emperor was required. This was usually complied with before the main worship service began on Sundays--in a few cases it was "conveniently" performed in the church yard outside the sanctuary just before the services began, but its observance was expected.

4. Regimentation in prescription of sermon topics and observance of special days became common. During one year every Sunday's sermon topics were prescribed; the Lenten season was shortened to a week once, while the hymnal and Church calendar were revised to meet the approval of the bureaucrats.

5. The Constitution of the United Church outlined the common bases of faith. The following Articles are a fair "sample" of what was prescribed:

> Article 5--The catechism of this kyodan is as follows: God was revealed in Jesus Christ, according to the Bible, is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the three in one. Through the Son, who became man, died, and was raised again for the salvation of the sin of the whole world, he redeems all believers in him, forgives their sins, justifies and purifies them, and gives them eternal life.
>
> The church is Christ's body, into which people are called by grace for common worship, observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Holy Communion, and for propagation of the gospel, awaiting the coming of our Lord.
>
> Article 6--This kyodan takes the Old and New Testaments as its scripture, trusting in the Apostles' Creed and other confessions of faith.
>
> Article 7--The life principles of this kyodan are as follows:
>
> a) Make your Christian faith stronger by following closely the way of traditional Japanese moral teaching, and thus contribute your share to the future of the Japanese empire.
>
> b) Keep the doctrines faithfully, observe the Sabbath, attend the services of worship, share the sacraments, and fulfill your duties to the church.

c) Make a practice of devotions, purify your home, and strive to improve social morality.[1]

6. Official recognition of any religious organization was withheld unless there were at least fifty churches and five thousand members within that organization. This put the "squeeze play" on small sects and numerically weak denominations which had to merge with kindred groups into "blocs"--or else cease to exist. These "blocs" were (at least at the beginning of the union) as follows:

Bloc 1--The Nippon Kirisuto Kyokai (Presbyterian and Reformed).
Bloc 2--The Japan Methodist Church, including several small Methodist-related sects.
Bloc 3--The Japan Congregational Church, the United Brethren, the Evangelical Church, and the Disciples.
Bloc 4--The Japan Baptist Church.
Bloc 5--The Japan Lutheran Church.
Bloc 6--The Nippon Sei Kyokai, which was the largest branch of the so-called Holiness Church, a product of the Oriental Missionary Society.
Bloc 7--A collection of smaller pentecostal denominations, including the Church of Jesus Christ, the Co-operative Christian Church, the Gospel Church, the Army of the Christian Gospel, the Resurrectionist Church, the Pentecostal Church, and the Pure Holiness Church.
Bloc 8--The Free Methodists, the Nazarenes, and the World Gospel League.
Bloc 9--The Free Christian Church.
Bloc 10--The Japan Independent Christian League.
Bloc 11--The Salvation Army.[2]

The penalty for not conforming to the requirements of the Government as handed down through the United Church was official non-recognition. There were forty-two Churches which came into the union for official recognition, in the eleven blocs mentioned above, in November, 1941. Many

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[1] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[2] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

groups came into the Union half-heartedly, a few welcomed the chance to merge with larger bodies in the blocs, many looked upon union by governmental cooercion as an answer to their prayers for true Christian unity, while a few refused to enter the Union at all and paid the penalty of remaining unrecognized by the Government.

The brief outline above of the formation of the United Church is only a small part of the entire story. Immediately after the recognition of the United Church Japan plunged into war with the Western powers. As a result, not all is yet known of the changes which took place within the Church during the war years, and even now, after almost seven years of waiting, the Creed has not been presented for adoption. It is said that the translators have the document ready--or almost ready--to present to the Church.[1,2]

At the end of the recent war it was the mutual desire of Japanese and American Christians that a meeting be arranged so that a rapid survey could be made of the conditions in and needs of the Church. A deputation from the United States was appointed for this survey. The members of that group were: Douglas Horton, Chairman (Congregational Church), Bishop James C. Baker (Methodist Church), Luman J. Shafer (Reformed Church), and Walter W. Van Kirk (Methodist Church). They visited Japan in October and November of 1945 and made public their survey which indicated that many changes did take place within the United Church during the war. A careful comparison of this report with figures

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[1] Grace K. Kerr, "Kyodan Receives Tentative Creed," The Christian Century, LXV (January 7, 1948), 24-25.

[2] Personal interview with Dr. T. T. Brumbaugh, Japanese scholar and former missionary to Japan.

used in tabulating the strength of the United Church as the nation went into war, indicates that drastic changes took place in the ranks of the "recognized" bodies.

A part of that report is offered:

> The crowning achievement of the Christians in Japan during the war was undoubtedly the establishment of the United Church of Christ. It was an immense task, this uniting of thirty-four denominations. We found this organization intact, with the church headquarters functioning actively. Besides the denominations, such Christian agencies as the Salvation Army, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association entered the Kyodan--as the United Church is called. The Seventh Day Adventists and 162 of the 230 churches of the Anglican Church--the Sei Ko Kwai--remained outside.
>
> At the beginning of the war the Kyodan had been organized into "branches" representing the different historical groupings comprising the union, but these were presently given up and the church formed into a strongly integrated whole. It was organized into nine districts with a superintendent in charge of each. There is an executive committee of thirty and an assembly of two hundred and fifty. All ministers, church officers, and members of committees and of the general assembly are appointed by the torisha or director of the church. There are eight departments of church work, each with a responsible officer in charge: General Administration, Evangelism, East Asia, Doctrine (now abolished), Woman's Work, Sunday School Work, Social Welfare, Publications, and Finance.
>
> During the war the Kyodan laid down several policies:
>
> (a). . . . regular retreats for ministers.
>
> (b). . . . few churches, if any, were closed up altogether, even when the buildings were destroyed.
>
> (c) The Kyodan worked hard to maintain the moral level of the country, chiefly through the local churches.
>
> (d) Over one hundred Christian workers were sent by the Kyodan to China and the Islands of the Pacific. These are not to be thought of as emissaries of empire, though in some cases they were undoubtedly too closely associated with the government's policy. We are convinced that their main desire was to spread the Gospel.
>
> A great deal of the energy of the (China) headquarters staff was spent in drawing up a catechism, which was undertaken in place of a general creed for the church. Every article had to receive the approval of a government dominated by nationalists, important elements of which sought to crush Christianity altogether. The result, at many points, may not meet the test

when checked against an ideal statement, but under the circumstances it is a remarkably adequate document.

. . . . . .

Before the war there were in Japan, according to the best available reports and estimates, 209,000 Protestant communicants and 100,000 Roman Catholics. . . . .

We found a general recognition even on the part of the present leadership that the existing form of the organization of the Church of Christ would have to be changed. It was clearly superimposed upon the church by legal enactment. It embodied the leadership principle common to all fascist organizations and consequently was not in accord with the essential genius of the Protestant Church.

. . . . We participated in conferences where this matter was freely discussed. It may be well to give some of these comments, without evaluation. "The United Church was the result of government pressure. The church organization is not democratic. The minister has all authority and the laymen have no place." "The union was the natural growth of twenty-five years, to which a push was given by the government. It is God's providence that the government pushed us together. In the laws governing the church there are undemocratic features. These must be changed, but the United Church is the result of more than government pressure." . . . .

We feel fairly certain of two things. The first is, that the Christian community in Japan will not return to the denominational chaos of the prewar years. We are convinced that while the form of the church organization was superimposed and government pressure gave the added impetus required to bring about a union of so comprehensive a character, the drive toward union within the Church was a factor of vital importance. This original union movement provides an important cohesive force today and the experience of working together during the war has, on the whole, strengthened belief in union.

Our second conclusion is that the present mode of organization of the Church of Christ will not continue. . . . .

There are several possibilities. One is that the present strong centralized union will be continued under a true ecclesiastical organization . . . . old denominational groupings . . . . merged into a unified church, with one general statement of creed. . . . .

A second possibility is a form of reorganization which would leave the United Church intact with central boards . . . . one general creed . . . . but with a stronger emphasis on the various groupings (with) the privilege of adopting additional creeds or confessions as they might desire. This would be in effect a return to the early form of union organization which existed at the beginning of the war, except that the overall organization would conform with usual church practice.

A third possibility . . . . giving . . . . greater autonomy to former denominational groupings, while . . . . retaining a strong federal organization. It should also be said that,

> whether it be a true union or a strong federation which emerges from the present movement, there will be certain groups which will maintain their independent denominational status.[1]

No report ever tells a complete story. The one offered above is no exception, for while it tells of the possibility of rebuilding the Kingdom among men it cannot recount the deeds of heroism performed by those who loved their Lord more than they loved their own lives. The imprisonment and suffering endured by two hundred and fifty ministers of the Holiness Church for their loyalty to the seemingly harmless doctrine that God is the Creator of Heaven and earth and the Judge of history, must remain forever as a monument to Christian loyalty.[2] Let it be remembered that such sufferings--and some of them were unto death--were not for crimes against society! They were akin to that inflicted upon the Christ who suffered in our stead. They suffered for their faith. They suffered rather than compromise. Not all Japanese Christians were called upon to bear the honor of suffering; a few met suffering for their faith face to face and turned away from suffering and from the faith. Members in and out of the United Church had to pass grueling tests at the hands of a non-Christian state. The great majority never wavered in the face of the hardships attendant upon their being Christians.

It appears that membership of religious bodies in the United Church was no sure guarantee that on the slightest pretext believers would not be cast into prison. This was true of the Holiness Church

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[1] Return to Japan, Report of the Christian Deputation to Japan, October-November 1945, Published for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (New York: Friendship Press, Inc.), pp. 37-44.

[2] Baker, op. cit., p. 20.

in which there was so much suffering on the part of the ministers. The Church was a part of the United Church but suffered persecution and was finally expelled because it refused to submit to governmental requirements.[1]

On the other hand, the Seventh Day Adventists never went into the Union, suffered non-recognition, and ceased to exist as a sect. Yet they carried on their work all through the war, benefited from official conferences with representatives of the Ministry of Education, and suffered a minimum of persecution.

For the most part Japanese Christians remained loyal under suffering. Because of this they demand the love, respect and assistance of all true Christians as they face the stupendous task of rebuilding the Church--whether it be the United Church or a better Church.

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[1] Ibid., p. 140.

(Acknowledgment is made of the partial use of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Richard Terrill Baker's Darkness of the Sun, pages 36-100, in presenting the outline given in the early part of this Chapter.)

CONCLUSION

The picture of the United Church of Christ in Japan has not been completed. Some people see of it only a small and incomplete part and say the picture is not good; others see still another part which reflects the master strokes of the hand Divine and to them the picture is beautiful, even if incomplete. This author feels that he would be entirely unfair to a loyal group of devoted and sincere Japanese Christians who have sacrificed for their faith if he were to say of their Church that it is bad. On the other hand, the Church picture is changing so rapidly since the war ended and such momentous adjustments are being made, that while correctly pronouncing the picture to be good today one might wish tomorrow that he could change such a statement.

The Church is almost entirely in the hands of the Japanese. There are, roughly, about fifteen hundred pastors, two thousand teachers, and two hundred and seventy missionaries at work in the country (both in and out of the Union) among approximately one hundred and eighty thousand Christians. Of the total number of Christians about eighty per cent are said to be within the United Church. However, with the recent exodus of several Churches from the Union, those figures may have to be revised downward. Among those Churches were: the Lutheran, the Nazarene, and the Southern Baptist, while the Anglican Church withdrew several months ago.

Those remaining within the Union include the Presbyterian, Northern Baptist, Methodist, Disciples of Christ, and the Evangelical-United Brethren Churches. They are co-operating along inter-denominational lines with missionaries from the home-Churches of North America assigned through a "Commission of Six" representing the Mission Boards of those Churches which, in turn, are in intimate contact with the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. This "Commission of Six" is composed of missionary members of the various Churches who, on the field, are charged with the responsibility of determining the need for workers, and for administering the relations of the home-Churches with the United Church.[1]

No predictions are offered as to the future of the United Church. However, it would seem that the exodus of many former members from the Union, following the cessation of hostilities and the disestablishment of State Shinto together with the granting of religious liberty to the nation, indicates that the United Church is, in its present form, not prepared to meet the needs of a people now subject to democratic processes. An increasing number of so-called Independent Missions are springing up all over the land, while some of the older bodies not referred to above are creating bonds of fellowship outside the officially recognized United Church.

> A new missionary group has appeared here under the name of "Evangelical Missions Association of Japan." Affiliated with the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association of Washington, D. C., under whose auspices it was organized, it so far

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[1] Look on the Fields. The Report of the Executive Secretary of the Division of Foreign Missions to the Eighth Annual Meeting, December 9-12, 1947. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1947), pp. 291-292.

> consists of these bodies: Nazarene, Scandinavian Alliance, Free Methodist, Southern Baptist, Wesleyan Methodist, Central Japan Pioneer, Assemblies of God, Far Eastern Gospel Crusade, Conservative Baptist, Mino, Japan Evangelistic Band, and Bible Presbyterian. The stated purpose is "representation before the national government and cooperative effort in promotion of field comity, provision of field information, preparation of evangelical literature and maintaining schools for missionary children and schools for language study.[1]

In conclusion the statements of two friends (not written exclusively for this thesis) are offered. It is not believed that either statement will greatly influence one who has not already reached his own conclusions regarding the United Church of Christ in Japan. They are offered merely as an indication that good and godly persons do not agree as to the qualifications of the present United Church to represent Jesus Christ as The Church of Japan. One, now a missionary in Japan, says:

> . . . . The so-called Union church in Japan is a farce. It is the usual super organized approach to this problem of Christian union. And the super organization strangling the life out of the denominational churches. It is the same pattern of concentrating ecclesiastical power in the hands of a few men at the top who control the policies and destinies of Churches, pastors, and the members of the churches. Open membership is the order of the day.[2]

The other, formerly a missionary in Japan for seventeen years, who assisted in forming the United Church, says:

> With release from war measures and restrictions, there have been withdrawals of certain . . . . groups from the united church. Yet even at the time of the earliest visits by American churchmen after the war, it could be reported

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[1] Grace K. Kerr, "Form Evangelical Group in Japan," The Christian Century, LXV (February 11, 1948), 179.

[2] Harold Cole, Excerpt from a letter appearing in The Restoration Herald, (October, 1947), 7.

> that an overwhelming majority of the fifteen hundred churches from the more than thirty Protestant bodies constituting the union were of a common mind and would continue relationship with the united church.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Certain of the leaders of the Church of Christ in Japan are well known in other lands. Others have come into new prominence during and since the war. Though many have fallen short of the stature of Christ-likeness—as we all have—it should be noted that none of these burden-bearers of the church have been purged by the Allied occupational authorities from participation in public life because of militaristic utterances or nationalistic attitudes, as have so many other national leaders.
>
> Loyal to their nation they may have been, but they were Christians. Having maintained throughout the war the indissoluble bond of spiritual fellowship that church leaders of the two nations had pledged . . . . they now look forward to new achievements in an age and atmosphere more conducive to Christian love and cooperation.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Christianity has made a good beginning among the Japanese by holding aloft the principles of Christ as the charter of all human welfare and international accord. Now let the churches of America complete the conquest of Japan for Christ-like love and the power to make men conform to their God-given ideals.[1]

The United Church of Christ in Japan is still in its infancy. Protestantism there is less than ninety years old while the United body is less than ten years old. This is entirely too short a period--and this period has been too full of brutality, bloodshed, and hatred occasioned by war--in which to form a basis for accurate judgments as to the future of that Church. It appears now that many changes will be made before a plan of union acceptable to all Christian groups in Japan will be effected. Until that time, hope and comfort are to be found in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: ". . . . and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[2]

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[1]T. T. Brumbaugh, Christ for All Japan (New York: Friendship Press, Inc., 1947), pp. 29, 32-33, 77.

[2]Matt. 16: 18.

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